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ABSTRACT

The College of Education at Wichita State University together with the Wichita Public Schools has designed a program for introductory education courses that is completely field based. The instructional teams are comprised of both public school and university personnel. The program is funded completely by Wichita State University and involves both elementary and secondary schools and students. Students enroll in three beginning courses in professional education which are fully integrated into experience-centered activities in a public school. Students enrolled reserve the time from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day for the field-based program. In this program, students do not come to the campus, the assigned school is the center for all instruction. Theory and practice are combined through activities that include functioning as a teacher aide, being involved in all school activities, making trips to observe unique educational programs and to interview educational specialists, participating in various community activities, and actually teaching in some classrooms. (Author/JA)

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ABSTRACT/INFORMATION FORM - 1974 DAA PROGRAM

Please Type or Print:

Name of Program Submitted: "A Field-Based Approach to Introductory Education Courses."

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Description

There is a need in teacher education programs to provide increased clinical experiences for students. The College of Education at Wichita State University together with the Wichita Public Schools has designed a program for introductory education courses that is completely field-based. The instructional teams are comprised of both public school and university personnel. The program is funded completely by Wichita State University and involves both elementary and secondary schools and students.

Students enroll in three beginning courses in professional education which are integrated fully in experience-centered activities in a public school. Students enrolled reserve the time from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day for the field-based program. In this program, students do not come to the campus; the assigned school is the center for all instruction.

Theory and practice are combined through activities which include functioning as a teacher aide, involvement in all school activities, trips to observe unique educational programs and to interview educational specialists, participation in various community activities and some actual classroom teaching.

It is anticipated that the research findings from this field-based program will have impact for teacher education.

SP 017 568

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The College of Education at Wichita State University in cooperation with faculty in the Wichita Public Schools has designed a completely field-based program for beginning students in teacher education. Uniquely, the program involves both entry-level students in foundations of education and educational psychology courses and graduate students (teachers) in the participating schools. The program has been developed so as to permit comparison of field-based students with students enrolled in regular campus-based courses.

Five teaching centers, both elementary and secondary, have been established to enable students in the beginning courses in professional education to synthesize practical experience with educational theory. Each student in the field-based program must reserve a specified time every school day for a semester to participate in a variety of field experiences -- as a classroom aide, in seminar groups, in faculty meetings, in visits to schools with unique programs, and in conferences with members of the teaching team. All activities after the first week of the semester take place in the school and community environment. The first week is utilized for orientation, student self examination and discussion of program organization and objectives.

The teaching team consists of both public school teachers and faculty of the College. The instructional program is individualized. Each student progresses at his own rate through

a series of packets*designed to provide both experiences in schools and concepts from educational foundations and educational psychology.

Teachers and administrators in the teaching centers are encouraged to enroll in course work that is individualized and related directly to the packets used by college students. Rather than placing emphasis upon course material, the packets are designed to assist experienced teachers in the process of evaluating and improving their instructional methodology.

The Field-Based Program is an attempt to utilize more effectively a variety of practicing professionals in the preparation of future teachers. If preparation programs are to be as effective as we would all desire, this sort of cooperation must be encouraged.

*These packets can be made available to the panel of judges, if desired.

A FIELD-BASED APPROACH TO INTRODUCTORY EDUCATION COURSES

Introduction

The College of Education at Wichita State University is intimately related to schools! Within teacher education programs, clinical experiences are almost taken for granted. From the Reading Center, which is a joint cooperative venture housed in a Wichita Public School facility, to methods courses in elementary education, which involve actually teaching in classrooms with children, to the Multi-Institutional Teacher Education Center, students preparing for teaching careers are involved with children and youth in real teaching-learning situations. Cooperation with schools in program development and implementation has long been basic to preparation programs in the College of Education.

Wichita State University, with an enrollment of over 14,000, is located in the largest urban center in the state of Kansas. The College of Education is one of seven degree-granting colleges in the University and is responsible for undergraduate and graduate programs for teachers, administrators, counselors, and other educational specialists. Although the College serves South-central Kansas, the programs give special attention to preparing students to work effectively in the urban scene.

Program Development

Although teacher education programs in the College of Education have long involved extensive clinical experiences for students as part of regular classes in professional education, faculty have been concerned that entry-level students were gaining limited views of the total educational process. Not until the professional semester for seniors were students able to be fully immersed in real teaching-learning environments and thus have opportunities to tie theoretical concepts to practice.

In 1972, faculty of the College of Education initiated a planning effort involving teachers and administrators in several schools of the Wichita System for the purpose of designing a completely field-based program for students entering the professional education program at either the elementary or secondary school level. The planning team consisted of two persons from each of five public schools and four College faculty; the chairman of the team is a public-school teacher.

The planning team operated from the premise that given a block of time in which instruction, including individually-designed learning experiences, can be adjusted to the observed needs of individual prospective teachers and in which actual experiences can be arranged to heighten the need to understand, use, and examine instructional theory, entry-level students in foundations of education and educational psychology will more effectively develop teaching competencies.

An important portion of the total project design was the built-in research component for the purpose of comparing students in the field-based program with students enrolled in similar on-campus classes. To this end, faculty working with both groups of students were to utilize the same instructional methods.

The planning team decided that the instructional program should be individualized with provision for students to move through the cognitive elements at their respective speeds. Learning packets for the essential content in foundations of education and educational psychology were developed during the spring and summer of 1973. Further, it was planned that student groups would be assigned to each of the cooperating schools and that, within each school, students would be assigned in part to individual cooperating teachers as classroom aides. To help teacher education students to be more fully informed and to be able to understand better educational goals, expectations and problems at all levels, project students were to be afforded opportunities to have experiences in schools other than the one to which they were initially assigned.

A major principle utilized in the planning phase was the contention that teacher education programs should be designed cooperatively by practitioners and teacher educators. As indicated earlier, the College of Education and the Wichita Public Schools have a history of cooperative program development in both preservice and inservice education.

Program Description

To be considered for participation in the field-based program, students must be able to reserve the time from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily in order to have enough time for participating in public school classes as aides, in faculty meetings, seminars, field trips, study groups, interviews, and other educational activities including travel time, tutoring, studying, and team counseling. The essential content of beginning courses in foundations of education and educational psychology in the teacher education program is included in the field-based program and is related immediately to the experiences students are having in classrooms in the five schools selected to be program centers. Concern for helping prepare better teachers and enthusiastic support for participating in the field-based program by a school faculty were the prime criteria for school participation.

The teaching team for each school in the field-based program is composed of the participating teachers and administrators at the school and College faculty members. Each team cooperatively plans activities for the college student classroom aides, counsels these students individually and in groups, is responsible for the discussion and instruction within seminar groups and works with the college students in any way necessary. The team has responsibility for evaluating various aspects of the program as well as the students enrolled in the field-based program.

The variety of experiences under such a program is possible only when students have built into their schedules common blocks of time within which individual assignments and activities may be altered without interference wit[illegible]er responsibilities in their academic programs. Likewise, University faculty participation requires block scheduling of the time of professors. Public school faculties willing to participate in such a program indicate their openness to include prospective teachers in a wide variety of on-going activities with the school, an arrangement almost impossible without the very close cooperation between the public school and the University faculty involved in the program. The teaching teams are involved in designing experiences to assist the college students in meeting the competencies developed as criteria for successful completion of the program. At any point at which a particular competency seems to trouble a student, the flexibility permitted within the time block can be used to let the student concentrate on this troublesome area.

The teaching teams for each center have met regularly beginning August 20, 1973, to plan the activities, schedules, seminars, and other procedures for the achievement of program objectives. Each school team meets for assessment, evaluation, and further planning. Elementary students and secondary students both are enrolled in the first semester of the field-based program. Students have been assigned to five participating

schools at different levels according to the student's desire and/or major. A similar number of students have been enrolled in the same courses taught on campus in traditional fashion. During the spring semester the program is to be continued as outlined for the fall semester but with new groups of students.

A unique aspect of the program is the graduate component. Approximately thirty-five teachers in the teaching centers are enrolled in a three-hour special studies course directly related to the instructional packets developed for the entry-level students assigned to their schools. These packets are designed to foster self-evaluation by the experienced teacher for the purpose of assisting in his or her instructional improvement.

Program Objectives

1. Students will develop a written statement of an examined, personal philosophy of education which incorporates the concept of openness in respecting themselves and others in a growth process of becoming.
2. Students will evidence a knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary purposes and functioning of the schools in the United States as well as an understanding of and appreciation for the characteristics of the culturally and socially different individual through seminar discussions and written reports.

3. Students will evince an understanding of the characteristics of the school in the present society and of the occupational role of the teacher through group discussions, reports on school-community relations, and individual research.
4. Students will demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the differing belief systems of educators concerning aims of education and schooling and the nature of human nature by analyzing their own belief system and applying their insights about belief systems to the functioning of schools and to teacher-pupil relationships.
5. Students will manifest understanding of the human developmental processes (biological, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral) as they fit into the continuum from birth to physical and psychological maturity by using this knowledge of human developmental processes to see classroom problems as they arise and by being able to make humane, rational, and creative decisions to deal with these problems.
6. Students will demonstrate the desire and ability to promote their own growth as classroom teachers and as members of the teaching profession and to continue to examine all aspects of the "fit" between psychological development and schooling at various levels in the spirit of scientific inquiry through their participation in activities, group discussions, and oral and written reports.

Program Evaluation

The field-based program will be compared to a similar program that is campus-based. The Wichita State University Committee on teaching has provided $2,000 to support an analysis of student progress toward teaching competencies. The faculty, although finding it difficult to control the environments to the degree desired, is collecting data that should provide helpful information in regard to the relative effectiveness of the field-based approach.

As part of the evaluation, the faculty, both public school and College of Education, are holding regular review sessions to make judgements of the progress of the students toward the stated objectives. In addition to the regular staff, administrators from both schools and the College of Education are being provided opportunity to observe and respond to student activities and are expected to assess progress.

Students involved in the program meet regularly with faculty to provide feedback concerning the program and, at the conclusion of the semester, will be expected to give their evaluation of how effectively they were able to meet objectives. At Wichita State University, students in regular programs are involved in the evaluation of courses.

Concluding Statement

It is our belief that students who have ample opportunity to be immersed in the school and community environments more

effectively relate theoretical concepts to teaching-learning situations. Further, it is believed that placing beginning students in a clinical setting in which the instructional team is composed of both public school and university personnel, gives these students access to a professional discussion of topics that serves to break down differences, real or imagined, between the college campus and schools. This program provides a model for extending the commonly-accepted observation/participation experiences normally available to beginning students in professional education to a full in-school experience that affords the students more complete access to the teacher role -- with immediate involvement in that role.